

Only three of the cases before the Court were of a serious nature—viz., burglary (two); indecent assault (one).

At the 31st March, 1935, there were seventeen prisoners in the Rarotonga Gaol serving sentences varying from two months to seven years.

The general conduct of both the European and Native population has been quite satisfactory, and major offences and crimes of violence have been absent during the year, excepting as above stated.

Civil Processes.—Thirty-eight civil summonses were served, and one writ of sale executed, during the year.

Motor Registration.—The annual licensing of motor-vehicles was commenced on 1st April, 1934, and since then 107 motor-vehicles have been licensed for use, and 28 new driving-licenses issued. Fees amounting to £247 12s. were collected, compared with £246 14s. 2d. for the previous year.

Dog Registration.—During the year sixty-six dogs were registered, as against sixty-two for the preceding twelve months.

Cinematograph Films Censorship.—One hundred and ten films were censored, and of this number five were rejected as unsuitable for exhibition to Native audiences, and parts were cut from nine others.

HURRICANE.

In February, 1935, Rarotonga and the Lower Group Islands, and Palmerston, experienced a hurricane, which resulted in much damage from the wind and the tremendous seas which accompanied the storm.

An unusual feature of the disturbance was the length of its duration. It commenced on Thursday, the 7th February, and did not abate until Monday, the 11th.

Rarotonga and Aitutaki were the two islands which suffered most damage, both in respect to buildings and to commercial and food crops.

Reconstruction and repairs to public buildings and property will involve an expenditure of approximately £5,500.

Privately-owned houses and property also sustained considerable damage. Houses built of native material can be comparatively cheaply rebuilt, but many of the Native-owned houses destroyed or damaged were permanently built structures with lime walls, sawn timber, and iron roofs.

Food crops were very seriously damaged in all the islands visited by the hurricane, and some of the staple articles of diet, such as breadfruit and taro and bananas, were completely wiped out.

Food crops will recover and will be normal again in about twelve months' time, but the problem is for the people to tide over that period.

Commercial crops also sustained much damage, and for some time exports of copra, oranges, and bananas will be very much reduced. There will be a consequent reduction in the earning and spending power of the people, who will have to go short of all luxuries and many of the ordinary necessities of life.

So far as the Administration is concerned, it has not only to face a large expenditure on account of reparation of damage to public property and services, but the decreased trade of the Group will be reflected in the loss of ordinary revenue under several headings, the principal being Customs duties, fruit-inspection fees, and trading licenses.

In addition to this, the Administration will be responsible to see that the people in the islands affected are assisted with sufficient sustenance until their ordinary food-supplies are rehabilitated.

Losses to commercial and food crops are summarized in the following table:—

Island.				Oranges.	Bananas.	Coconuts.	Bread-fruit.	Taro.	Kumara.	Yams.
				Per Cent.	Per Cent.	Per Cent.	Per Cent.	Per Cent.	Per Cent.	Per Cent.
Rarotonga	..	..	..	30	60	40	90	50	30	..
Aitutaki	..	..	..	95	100	70	100	100	50	100
Mauke	..	..	..	50	100	30	100	30	30	..
Mangaia	..	..	..	50	15	20	80	15	10	..
Atiu	..	..	..	40	30	30	90	30	30	..
Mitiaro	..	..	..	70	80	75	..	60	75	..
Palmerston	..	..	..	Total loss of all foodstuffs.						

The hurricane left the Administration and the people in the islands most affected a stupendous task in the reconstruction and repair of buildings, replanting of both food and commercial crops, and general clearing and cleaning up.

During the terrifying night of Sunday, the 10th February, when the storm was at its height, with the wind roaring at hurricane force and tremendous seas rolling inland, and no one could foretell what the end was going to be, there was not a single instance of panic, but on the contrary there were several cases where conspicuous courage was exhibited, and above all there was a spirit of helpfulness and co-operation.

After the storm abated the Natives in every island voluntarily came out to a man to assist in clearing the roads and public properties of the thousands of tons of coral rock, stones, and sand thrown up by the seas, fallen trees, and other debris.